

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

A meeting of Crime and Disorder Select Committee was held on Thursday, 8th October, 2020.

Present: Cllr Pauline Beall(Chair), Cllr Paul Weston(Vice-Chair), Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Tony Riordan and Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley.

Officers: Stephen Donaghy, Mark Berry (A&H); Chris Renahan (FD&BS); Marc Stephenson (CS); Gareth Aungiers (Xentrall); Gary Woods, Peter Bell (MD)

Also in attendance: Gary Cookland (Cleveland Police)

Apologies: Cllr Clare Gamble and Cllr Andrew Sherris.

CD Declarations of Interest

12/20

There were no interests declared.

CD Minutes

13/20

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee meeting which was held on the 10th September 2020 for approval and signature.

Members were informed that a further update on the approaches of other Local Authorities to the issue of fly-grazed horses would be provided at this meeting, which would necessitate an amendment to some of the licenced grazing scheme information previously recorded. The September 2020 minutes would therefore be amended accordingly.

AGREED that the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the necessary changes identified in relation to the fly-grazed horses agenda item.

CD Scrutiny Review of Fly-Grazed Horses

14/20

This additional evidence-gathering session for the Scrutiny Review of Fly-Grazed Horses considered information from Cleveland Police, the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Land and Property team, and a further update on the approaches undertaken by other Local Authorities around licenced grazing schemes. It was also noted that feedback from the informal September 2020 meetings with horse-owners had been recently circulated to Members.

CLEVELAND POLICE

The Cleveland Police representative informed the Committee that progress on the previously discussed Force fly-grazed horses strategy had been limited due to the impact of COVID-19 (and other issues). However, there had been some developments which were noted as follows:

- Individuals with responsibility for this area of work within Hartlepool and Middlesbrough had been identified and contacted, and a willingness (in principal) to enter into discussions around the implementation of a Force-wide strategy had been demonstrated. Unfortunately, Redcar and Cleveland had not been so forthcoming.
- After consultation with the Force's legal team, it had been agreed that the Force-wide approach should continue, and that those who want to be involved should look to progress a solution. It was hoped that as this strategy develops, Redcar and Cleveland will join in with the plan moving forward.
- An initial meeting with key Local Authority personnel will be scheduled to take place in the next couple of weeks – this will involve discussions around a strategy based on the York protocol (previously seen by the Committee). Should those present agree in principal with the plan, approval from the Force's legal team will be sought before an implementation timeline is set.

SBC LAND & PROPERTY

Reference was made to the paper circulated to Members prior to this meeting which outlined the SBC Land and Property team's view on this issue, specifically the use of Council land for the fly-grazing of horses.

The Committee was reminded that SBC was currently undertaking a broader Asset Review of all assets (including Council-owned land, open spaces and playing fields) to identify sites that could be designated as surplus and made available for other uses, development or disposal. If the proposal to investigate land for the fly-grazing of horses was approved, this would be incorporated into this broader Asset Review to understand all possible uses for designated surplus land. Any land identified would be subject to consultation with the relevant Councillors.

Members were provided with a list of key factors that would require consideration should land (Council-owned or private) be identified as a potential area to facilitate fly-grazing, including:

- Site requirements
- Initial set-up costs
- Site management
- Planning matters

The need for both the Council's Environmental Health service and Land and Property team to work together to adequately assess any potential land was emphasised.

OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITY / POLICE FORCE APPROACHES

Members were informed that, since the last Committee meeting in September 2020, Environmental Health Officers had spoken at length to the two Local Authorities previously highlighted for their work around licenced grazing. Further updates were provided as follows:

Dudley

- Each of the eight sites they operate is enclosed designated land that horse-owners lease off the Council. The only responsibility the Council has is the fencing.

Wakefield

- Up to 40 pitches are available for the fly-grazing of horses, but horse-owners only get a designated peg for their horse. Fee for the designated peg is £10-£20 per year (bringing a total income of around £500 per year).
- Provision of water / removal of manure is the horse-owners responsibility.
- There is much greater demand than the number of pegs available, with around 100-150 horses being fly-grazed across the Local Authority.
- Horse-owners generally compliant as there is a long waiting-list and they fear losing their peg.
- Still have a fly-grazed horses issue in other parts of the Borough as the Council are unable to meet demand – there is a willingness to expand the current offer, but there are also sensitivities around land-use.

Regarding the latter point, Members acknowledged the challenges around the differing views on the prioritisation of land for fly-grazing horses over other potential uses. To this end, the Committee queried if there were any sites / locations within Stockton-on-Tees that Officers felt may be available for a future licenced fly-grazing scheme. In response, it was stated that, at present, there are no areas across the Borough that appear suitable for such a scheme, though this could be further explored should the Committee recommend it.

AGREED that the information provided be noted.

CD 15/20 Action Plan for Agreed Recommendations - Review of Protection of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home

Members were presented with the Action Plan setting out how the agreed recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Protection of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home would be implemented, and target dates for completion.

This Action Plan was due to be considered by the Committee in March 2020, but due to COVID-19 (and the subsequent impact of the pandemic on the Council and other key partners involved in this review), a number of challenges were encountered when attempting to compose this draft document. Some partner-organisations had also seen significant staffing changes since the review was completed, with replacement personnel needing to be briefed on the review and the agreed recommendations that emerged.

Discussion ensued around the proposed actions that were the responsibility of Thirteen Housing Group (recommendations 2-6, three of which Thirteen felt had already been completed). Members drew particular attention to recommendation 2 (Thirteen extend its older people support service to tenants in the Borough's dispersed bungalows on a needs basis (in line with neighbouring Local Authorities)), and voiced concern that there seemed to be an expectation that the Council funds any service extension, when they and other Councillors had been made aware of the very strong financial position that Thirteen were in (particularly compared to the Local Authority). The Committee

proposed that discussions between SBC and Thirteen around this recommendation are initiated so that both organisations are clear on how this can be progressed.

Members were informed that, for recommendation 12 (There is a continued push for greater buy-in of E-CINS to foster a joined-up approach across all organisations in identifying and sharing details of those older people who they consider to be 'vulnerable'), other information-sharing packages are emerging that may supersede E-CINS. However, the overarching aim of the proposed action will still be to ensure timely and efficient sharing of information between partners.

AGREED that:

- 1) the Action Plan be approved.
- 2) discussions between SBC and Thirteen Housing Group around recommendation 2 are initiated so that both organisations are clear on how this can be progressed.

**CD
16/20** **Work Programme 2020-2021**

Consideration was given to the Crime and Disorder Select Committee Work Programme for 2020-2021. The next Committee meeting was scheduled for the 5th November 2020 and would comprise two parts; a formal agenda followed by an informal session to consider a summary of the evidence received in relation to the Scrutiny Review of Fly-Grazed Horses.

Regarding the 'Action Plan – CCfA: Obstructive and Illegal Parking around Whitehouse Primary School' item that had again been delayed and would now be considered at November's formal meeting, the Chair noted the very sad recent passing of Cllr Julia Cherrett who co-proposed the original Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) and had provided evidence to the Committee during the subsequent investigation.

AGREED that the Crime & Disorder Select Committee Work Programme for 2020-2021 be noted.

**CD
17/20** **Chair's Update**

The Chair had no further updates.